

(b) An Amount of Rs. 34557.42 lakhs has been sanctioned and Rs. 13613.81 lakhs released for tourism projects in the country during the last five years.

(c) and (d) Though implementation and maintenance of tourism projects are undertaken by the State Governments/U.T. Administrations, Department of Tourism, Government of India, takes various steps for monitoring of proper utilization of funds and maintenance of tourist and religious places in different States. For instance funds are released in instalments, release of subsequent instalment is made only after receipt of utilization certificates, monitoring is done of project implementation at various levels etc. State Governments/U.T. Administrations are also required to sign a Management Agreement for proper upkeep and maintenance of assets created with central financial assistance.

Increasing tourist potential in South Asian countries

1194. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether South Asian countries have a vast tourism potential but still the region receives only one per cent of the global share in tourists; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to increase the tourism potential in this region?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) According to the report on tourism market trends released by the World Tourism Organisation, the share of tourist arrivals in South Asian countries as compared to the world tourist arrivals has increased from 0.7 per cent in the year 1995 to 0.9 per cent in the year 2000.

(b) The same report indicates that the Governments of South Asian nations have resorted to more aggressive and multifarious marketing and promotional campaign including participation in international tourism trade fairs, organisation of familiarization tours

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RAJYA SABHA

for the international media and travel writers and setting up of new tourist offices in established and potential markets.

Bheraghat tourist spot, Jabalpur

†1195. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the category in which the world famous Bheraghat tourist spot of Jabalpur has been placed;

(b) whether there is any scheme to develop it as an international tourist spot;

(c) if so, the steps taken so far in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Bheraghat in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh is an attractive scenic spot.

(b) Promotion of tourism is a continuous process. The Government is promoting foreign as well as domestic tourism in the country including Madhya Pradesh through its 18 overseas offices by advertising in print & electronic media, participation in travel fairs, inviting media, and Travel Agents on familiarization trips, extensive use of Information Technology in tourism promotion etc. Domestic tourism is encouraged through 21 field offices within India. However, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has not evolved any guidelines for categorisation of places of tourist importance/attraction within the State.

(c) The Eleventh Finance Commission has recommended grants amounting to Rs. 15.00 crores for development of tourism related infrastructure in and around Bheraghat. Finance Ministry has released Rs. 3.02 crores for implementing the partial Action Plan submitted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh for this scheme.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.